

Healthy People 2030 Summary: Education Access and Quality

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Healthy People of 2030 provides the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) with literature summaries. These summaries provide the latest research related to the SDOH and show how it affects health outcomes and health disparities. A social determinant that I am intrigued by is Education Access and Quality. Throughout my childhood I have had friends who would drop out of high school in Hawai'i. It is speculated that it is normal for young high school students to fail or leave school. With the few young students who do finish high school, not many of these students do not seek any higher education. Out of 20 of my classmates, only 8 students have been through a college or university. In hopes for more insight, I chose Education Access and Quality to find out reasons for these results in addition to health outcomes that may potentially affect students in the future. Overall health in the future is directly and indirectly affected by education access and quality through early childhood development and education, high school graduation, enrollment in higher education, and proficient English and literacy.

It is said that early childhood development and education can be affected by early life stress and adverse events, which impacts the mental and physical health of children. These stressors may include physical abuse, unsafe neighborhoods, physical abuse, poverty, and family instability. Environmental hazards, such as lead, is also a leading cause of cognitive developmental delays which disproportionately affects children from racial or ethnic minority and low-income houses resulting in adverse effects of children's readiness for school. The socioeconomic statuses of young children's families and communities also affects educational outcomes by disadvantaged backgrounds. Communities with higher socioeconomic statuses and resources allow children to have a safer and supportive environment for better early education programs. Additionally from the literature, children who participated in early childhood development and education programs had lower risk for heart disease and associated risk factors

by the age of their mid-30s. Overall, by addressing the disparities in access to early childhood development and education opportunities can strengthen future health outcomes.

A high school diploma is the standard requirement for most jobs. Incompletion of high school is linked to many negative factors that impact health such as poverty, low wages, and limited employment prospects. A student's ability to graduate from high school may also be affected by broader institutional factors such as schools, communities, and families. Specifically, risk factors that contribute to the likelihood of graduating from high school, such as reading skills in early ages, affect long-term academic achievements. Negative health outcomes may result from incompleteness of high school such poor health or premature death.

Higher education such as 2-year to 4-year college degrees, certificate programs, graduate programs, and professional programs can lead to improved health and well-being. Those who have gone through a high education program have shown to have economic security in comparison to those who have not. "Higher education helps people secure better-paying jobs with fewer safety hazards" (*Enrollment in high education*). Economic security may improve health by increasing the ability to accrue material resources, psychosocial resources, and high social statuses.

Lastly, language and literacy may also play a role in people's overall health. In the United States, it is stated in this summary that limited English proficiency can be a barrier to accessing health care services and understanding health information. It is also a barrier to accessing health information, proper medication use, and utilization of preventive services. Since I have been a staff nurse for St. Joseph's Medical Center in Stockton for roughly over 3 years, I have experienced many instances in which people do not seek health services due to communication issues. I have had many patients with various ethnic backgrounds such as Hmong, Filipino, and

Chinese who have difficulty in communicating health needs due to limited English proficiency and literacy. Questions such as medication directions and follow-up appointments arise from people of these ethnic backgrounds tend to arise after discharging due to lack of understanding post-discharge instructions. In efforts to improve understanding of health literacy, it is said in the literature summary that trained interpreters and bilingual health care providers help improve patient satisfaction, quality of care, and health outcomes. There is a need for health care providers and organizations to be more engaged in implementing strategies to meet the needs of diverse populations to improve language and literacy.

Overall health in the future is directly and indirectly affected by education access and quality through early childhood development and education, high school graduation, enrollment in higher education, and proficient English and literacy. Although I did not find specific reasons why it is normal for young high school students to fail or leave school in Hawai'i, I have learned social determinants that may have affected these students and what their overall health may look like in the future.

References

Enrollment in higher education. Enrollment in Higher Education - Healthy People 2030. (n.d.).

<https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/enrollment-higher-education> 